

**Western Alaska Access Planning Study
Noorvik Public Meeting Notes
January 25, 2011**

Open House	3:00pm-3:30pm
Presentation	3:30pm-4:30pm
Comments/Questions	4:30pm-5:30pm

Project Team Representation

AK DOT&PF: Alexa Greene
DOWL HKM: Steve Noble, Chase Nelson

Attendance

20 people attended the meeting.

Presentation

AK DOT&PF and DOWL HKM set up for a public meeting at the City community hall. Maps were displayed on various tables around the room.

Alexa Greene started the meeting by introducing herself, Steve Noble and Chase Nelson. After introductions Steve led the presentation of the Western AK access planning study.

Questions & Comments

Q = Question R = Response C = Comment

C: I prefer Route 1. If Route 1 were chosen, you could bring the road to Deering, then use the Innachuk trail corridor to tie into the Taylor Highway. Also if you select Route 1, you could access all the resources around Ambler.

R: Route 1 does have many advantages; the major hurdle with Route 1 though is crossing the Selawik National Refuge. It would take an Act of Congress to be able to construct a road through the National Refuge.

C: The road would decrease the costs for us, and would also decrease the costs of mining.

R: Yes, a road would decrease costs for residents in the affected area greatly. The Ambler Mining district has a world class Copper deposit, and the reason it hasn't been developed is because of the limited access. The costs of developing a mine here would be reduced if there was a road.

C: I am not going to see the road, I realize this, but I'm thinking about my grandchildren and I support the road.

Q: What type of road would it be?

R: The road would be similar to the Dalton Highway. It would be a two lane gravel road with about a 45 mph design speed. Traffic on this road would probably be similar to the Dalton Highway, with a large amount of industrial traffic.

Q: Would spur roads be built in conjunction with the main road?

R: It depends. The road might go directly through some villages, so no spur roads would be needed in some cases. However, villages further off the road would have to raise some money to build a spur road to the main road if they would like to be connected.

Q: What effects to other DOT&PF projects will this project have?

R: This project won't be competing with other projects for federal STIP dollars. At this point the project is being fully funded with State funds.

Q: If it were built, who would maintain it?

R: The State DOT&PF would be responsible for the maintenance. Approximately every fifty miles there would be a maintenance station. This would be an opportunity for jobs. Maintenance costs would be covered by the DOT&PF maintenance and operations budget.

Q: Have you looked at the gravel sources along the route?

R: Typically with road jobs we try to identify a road alignment with a major gravel source every ten miles. With this project we have studied the area's geology, but have not completed a detailed study of gravel sources along the preferred alignment.

Q: Do you see a problem with naturally occurring asbestos, like in Ambler?

R: We don't foresee asbestos being an issue along the WAAPS corridor, but it is something we will address as we continue our study. The asbestos in the Ambler district is a primarily localized problem.

C: My opinion is I'd hope it would drive down the costs of fuels and services. Some Alaska Native Corporations subsidize the costs of fuels and goods in the villages, but NANA doesn't do this- so our prices are very high.

Q: Would there be shelter cabins and mileposts along the road?

R: There certainly would be mileposts, but shelter cabins would depend on land ownership. There will be gas stations, state maintained facilities and there would be State Troopers along the route.

Q: Would this impact the inter-tie road between Selawik, Kiana, and Noorvik to Kotzebue?

R: We understand that the inter-tie road is one of the highest priorities in the Northwest Arctic Borough. Just because we are doing this study, doesn't impact that project moving forward. We will consider the inter-tie project in our study.

C: Ambler will be the next big city in the area because of all the mineral resources.

R: We are familiar with the Maniilaq prophecies and what they say about the village of Ambler becoming the big hub.

Q: Does the petroleum industry have an interest in this road?

R: We did analyze the potential for oil and gas development in the area. There is potential, but the known resource is minimal, so it did not affect our alignment selection and didn't play a major role in our study.